

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GUATEM 01015 212345Z

72

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 L-02 H-02 SCSE-00 SCA-01 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-02 USIA-15 PRS-01 SP-02 /043 W

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R 212310Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5953

INFO AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

UNCLAS GUATEMALA 1015

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CPRS, GT

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON LAWS PROTECTING HISTORIC
MONUMENTS AND SITES

1. GUATEMALAN CONGRESSMAN HAS INTRODUCED BILL WHICH WOULD PROHIBIT OWNERS OF REAL PROPERTY IN CITY OF ANTIGUA FROM SELLING, BEQUEATHING OR OTHERWISE TRANSFERRING OWNERSHIP TO PERSONS NOT CITIZENS OF GUATEMALA. BILL HAD ATTRACTED LITTLE ATTENTION OR APPARENT SUPPORT UNTIL THIS WEEK WHEN HEAVY NEWSPAPER PUBLICITY CONCERNING PROPOSED SALE OF LAND ADJOINING COLONIAL SAN FRANCISCO CHURCH TO AN UNIDENTIFIED AMERICAN LED TO EMOTIONAL CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE. LAND REPORTEDLY CONTAINS SOME RUINS FROM ORIGINAL CHURCH. CONGRESS ADOPTED RESOLUTION INTRODUCED BY OPPOSITION PR AND DC DEPUTIES CALLING ON EXECUTIVE BRANCH TO USE ALL POWERS AVAILABLE TO IT, PENDING ADOPTION OF NEW LEGISLATION BY CONGRESS, TO DEFEND "NATIONAL VALUES" AND PREVENT SALE OF LANDS, BUILDING OR PLACES CONSIDERED HISTORIC. (ENTIRE CITY OF ANTIGUA HAS FOR SOME TIME BEEN OFFICIALLY DESIGNATED AS A NATIONAL MONUMENT.)

2. COMMENT: NUMBER OF AMERICANS ARE PROPERTY OWNERS

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IN ANTIGUA AND MANY HAVE SPENT CONSIDERABLE SUMS RESTORING

COLONIAL BUILDINGS. VALUE OF THEIR INVESTMENTS WILL BE SEVERELY ERODED IF THEY ARE PROHIBITED FROM RE-SALE EXCEPT TO GUATEMALANS, AND WE CAN EXPECT PROTESTS TO EMBASSY AND TO U.S. CONGRESS.

3. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFORMATION WHICH ADDRESSEES CAN SUPPLY ON LOCAL LEGISLATION OR LACK THEREOF ON PROTECTION OF HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS. THIS WILL BE USEFUL IN OUR DISCUSSIONS HERE AS INDICATION OF WAYS SUCH SITES CAN BE PROTECTED WITHOUT BLANKET BAN ON SALE TO FOREIGNERS. OAS LEGAL DEPARTMENT MAY HAVE COLLECTED LAWS ON THIS SUBJECT. POUCHES COPIES OF FULL SPANISH TEXTS WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL, BUT CABLED SUMMARY ALSO DESIRED IN VIEW STRONG POSSIBILITY SITUATION HERE MAY DEVELOP QUICKLY.
MELOY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975GUATEM01015
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750063-0531
From: GUATEMALA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750224/aaaaavlf.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 SEP 2003 by ellisoob>; APPROVED <30 DEC 2003 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON LAWS PROTECTING HISTORIC MONUMENTS AND SITES
TAGS: CPRS, GT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006